

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----058011 231350Z /42

O R 231207Z JUN 77
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6856
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST UNN
USMISSION USUN
USMISSION SINAI
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 TEL AVIV 4569

EXDIS

NEA FOR AMBASSADOR LEWIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, IS, US
SUBJECT: THE BEGIN GOVERNMENT AND UNSC RESOLUTION 242

REF: TEL AVIV 4451

SUMMARY: THE NEW GOVERNMENT'S BASIC GUIDELINES AND
DAYAN'S JUNE 20 KNESSET STATEMENT LEAVE AN AMBIGUITY IN
ISRAEL'S POSITION RE UNSC RESOLUTION 242. IT IS UNCLEAR WHETHER
ISRAEL ACCEPTS THE SUBSTANCE OF THAT RESOLUTION INCLUDING THE
PRINCIPLE OF TERRITORIAL WITHDRAWAL OR AGREES ONLY TO
ATTEND A RECONVENED GENEVA CONFERENCE UPON RECEIVING
A US/USSR INVITATION BASED ON RESOLUTIONS 242/338. WE
BELIEVE THAT BEGIN HAS TAKEN THE MINIMUM STEP NECESSARY
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AT THIS STAGE TO INDICATE ISRAELI READINESS TO ATTEND A
GENEVA CONFERENCE WHILE PROTECTING HIS POSITION AGAINST
WITHDRAWAL FROM THE WEST BANK. AT THE SAME TIME, HE
HAS SET THE STAGE FOR EMPHASIZING TO PRESIDENT CARTER
THAT RESOLUTION 242 -WHICH IS THE ONLY INTERNATIONALLY
ACCEPTED BASIS FOR NEGOTIATIONS - ADDRESSES THE
PALESTINIAN ISSUE AS A REFUGEE PROBLEM WITHOUT REFERENCE

TO EITHER A PALESTINIAN STATE OR HOMELAND. END SUMMARY.

1. IT MAY BE USEFUL TO HIGHLIGHT THE SIGNIFICANCE AS WELL AS THE AMBIGUITY OF THE DECISIONS AND STATEMENTS OF THE BEGIN GOVERNMENT IN THE KNESSET THIS WEEK REGARDING UNSC RESOLUTION 242. THE RELEVANT PORTIONS OF THE BASIC GUIDELINES, WHICH WERE FORMALLY INCORPORATED IN BEGIN'S KNESSET SPEECH OF JUNE 20, ARE AS FOLLOWS:

--(G) (EMG OF REFTEL) THE GOVERNMENT DECLARES ITS READINESS TO PARTICIPATE IN THE GENEVA CONFERENCE IF AND WHEN IT SHALL BE CONVENED BY THE UNITED STATES AND THE SOVIET UNION ON THE BASIS OF SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTIONS 242 AND 338.

--(I) (3.I OF REFTEL) IN THE ABSENCE OF PEACE AGREEMENTS THE PARTIES SHALL BE BOUND BY THE AGREEMENTS BETWEEN THEM WHICH WERE SIGNED BY THE PREVIOUS GOVERNMENTS.

2. OSTENSIBLY, THESE STATEMENTS EXPRESS THE CONTINUITY OF ISRAELI FOREIGN POLICY SINCE 1967. HOWEVER, IN ORDER TO PLACE THESE STATEMENTS IN CONTEXT, IT IS NECESSARY TO RECALL THAT BEGIN RESIGNED FROM THE NATIONAL UNITY GOVERNMENT IN AUGUST 1970 PRECISELY OVER HIS OPPOSITION TO GOI ENDORSEMENT OF RESOLUTION 242. WE HAD ASKED THE ISRAELI GOVERNMENT AT THAT TIME TO STATE ITS ACCEPTANCE OF 242 AS THE BASIS FOR NEGOTIATING EFFORTS BEING CONDUCTED BY AMBASSADOR JARRING IN THE WAKE OF THE CONFIDENTIAL

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EGYPTIAN-ISRAELI CEASEFIRE AGREEMENT. BEGIN, THEN MINISTER WITHOUT PORTFOLIO, OBTAINED A SLENDER MAJORITY IN GAHAL, AGAINST THE OBJECTIONS OF THE LIBERALS AND EZER WEIZMAN, TO WITHDRAW FROM THE GOVERNMENT. HIS BASIC OBJECTION WAS TO THE ACCEPTANCE BY ISRAEL OF THE PRINCIPLE OF TERRITORIAL WITHDRAWAL PRECEDING ARAB INDICATIONS OF READINESS TO ENTER INTO FINAL PEACE AGREEMENTS WITH ISRAEL. FROM 1970 TO THE PRESENT, THERE HAVE BEEN NO SIGNS THAT BEGIN HAS CHANGED HIS POSITION.

3. IN DMC/LIKUD NEGOTIATIONS EARLIER THIS MONTH, DMC LEADERS CLAIMED THAT BEGIN HAD REFUSED TO ACCEPT THEIR PROPOSAL TO INCLUDE A REFERENCE IN THE BASIC GUIDELINES TO RESOLUTIONS 242 AND 338. THE DMC LEADERSHIP SUBSEQUENTLY CITED BEGIN'S INTRANSIGENCE ON THIS MATTER AS WELL AS ON OTHER ISSUES AS UNDERSCORING THEIR DIFFERING APPROACHES TO FOREIGN POLICY AND JUSTIFYING THEIR DECISION TO STAY OUT OF THE COALITION.

4. IN THE KNESSET DEBATE ON JUNE 29, DAYAN SADI FROM THE ROSTRUM THAT HE INTERPRETED POINT (I) OF THE GUIDELINES

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6857
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 TEL AVIV 4569

EXDIS

NEA FOR AMBASSADOR LEWIS

(PARA 1 ABOVE) AS MEANING THAT THE BEGIN GOVERNMENT
INDEED ACCEPTED 242 AND 338, ADDING THAT BEGIN WAS FREE
TO DENY THIS IF IT WERE NOT THE CASE. DAYAN NOTED THAT
HE HAD NOT PARTICIPATED IN THE LIKUD/DMC NEGOTIATIONS,
AND THUS WAS BASING HIS INTERPRETATION ONLY ON THE TEXT
OF THE GUIDELINES. BEGIN, WHO SPOKE LAST IN THE DEBATE,
MADE NO COMMENT ON THIS POINT AT ALL. POLITICAL
COMMENTATORS HERE HAVE NOTED THE UNRESOLVED AMBIGUITY
BETWEEN DAYAN'S INTERPRETATION AND THE WORDING OF
GUIDELINE (G) WHICH SIMPLY SAYS THAT ISRAEL IS READY TO
ATTEND A GENEVA CONFERENCE IF AND WHEN THE U.S. AND USSR
CONVENE IT ON THE BASIS OF 242 AND 338, BUT DOES NOT SAY
THAT ISRAEL ACCEPTS THE CONTENT OF THESE RESOLUTIONS.

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5. SEVERAL COMMENTATORS HERE MAINTAIN THAT BEGIN NOW HAS SET THE STAGE FOR EXPRESSING TO THE PRESIDENT ISRAEL'S ACCEPTANCE OF 242 IN ORDER TO UNDERSCORE THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITMENT THEREIN TO TREATING THE PALESTINIAN ISSUE AS A REFUGEE PROBLEM. BEGIN WILL NOTE THAT SUBSEQUENT ARAB CLAIMS, IN THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AND ELSEWHERE, TO AN INDEPENDENT PALESTINIAN STATE AS WELL AS RECENT U.S. STATEMENTS RE A PALESTINIAN HOMELAND ARE OUTSIDE THE AGREED FRAMEWORK OF 242. THEREFORE, HE WILL CONCLUDE, THERE IS NO INTERNATIONALLY AGREED LEGAL BASIS FOR HANDLING THE PALESTINIAN ISSUE IN ANY WAY EXCEPT IN TERMS OF SEEKING A HUMANITARIAN SOLUTION FOR THE PALESTINIAN REFUGEES. WHILE WE DO NOT HAVE HARD EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT THIS THESIS, IT DOES SEEM PLAUSIBLE.

6. OUR IMPRESSION IS THAT, APART FROM THE PALESTINIAN ISSUE, BEGIN HAS TAKEN THE MINIMUM STEP NECESSARY TO INDICATE ISRAEL'S READINESS TO GO TO A GENEVA CONFERENCE WITHOUT COMMITTING HIMSELF EXPLICITLY AT THIS STAGE TO THE PRINCIPLE OF TERRITORIAL WITHDRAWAL. HIS OBJECTIVE IN THIS REGARD PRBABLY IS TWOFOLD: A) TO PROTECT HIS BARGAINING POSITION ON ALL ISSUES AT LEAST UNTIL HE MEETS THE PRESIDENT; AND B) TO PRESERVE THE INTEGRITY OF HIS POSITION AGAINST WITHDRAWAL FROM THE WEST BANK.

7. THE AMBIGUITY, IN OUR JUDGMENT, IS INTENTIONAL. IT STRIKES US AS INDICATIVE OF THE SKILLFUL AND CAREFULLY-HONED APPROACH WHICH BEGIN AND DAYAN ARE TAKING, AND CAN BE EXPECTED TO TAKE, ON A NUMBER OF ISSUES RELATED TO ARAB/ISRAEL NEGOTIATIONS. IT IS AN APPROACH WHICH THEY HOPE WILL COMBINE SUFFICIENT FLEXIBILITY AND MODERATION TO MEET OUR MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS AND FOR ISRAEL TO BE SEEN AS ACCEPTING THE EXISTING NEGOTIATING CONTEXT, WHILE AT

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THE SAME TIME PROTECTING THEIR BASIC INTERESTS AND OBJECTIVES -PARTICULARLY AS REGARDS THE WEST BANK. WHETHER THEY WILL BE SUCCESSFUL REMAINS TO BE SEEN.
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Message Attributes

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